



SPECIAL
COLLECTIONS
DOUGLAS
LIBRARY



QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY
AT KINGSTON
Presented by

KINGSTON ONTARIO CANADA

A SHORT
LETTER
TO
A FRIEND IN THE COUNTRY,
UPON
THE QUESTION OF REFORM,
AND THE
DISTURBANCES IN THE METROPOLIS

Neque inala vel bona
Quam vulgus putet . . .

London :

PRINTED FOR J. HATCHARD,
BOOKSELLER TO HER MAJESTY, OPPOSITE AIDANY,
PICCADILLY.

1810

113 111 1810. 554

A short Letter, &c.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOU will only receive this Letter when it shall have assumed the form of a Pamphlet. The printer will intercept and sadly mutilate my manuscript, and with some alarm you will receive your old acquaintance in the new character of an author. There is something, however, in this age particularly felicitous for the reception of pamphlets, they are every day crowding in abundance upon the attention; the subject of public interest or the ephemeral topic of the hour generates and is illustrated by its family of *little books*. Comfort yourself in the hope then, that among the number *mine* may remain unnoticed,

and that its only criticism may be at our own fireside, where my defence will surely be victorious.

So violent are the endeavours to misguide the public mind, and so much do the new principles now afloat require a steady check, that I do not think it unbecoming in any man, capable of putting his thoughts upon paper, however deficient in the ability adequate for critical notice, or though defective in the minuter points of intelligence, to contribute his small share of information in aid of a good purpose, and to join heartily in the warning-call to his countrymen, to pause before they are hurried farther on, and not madly to sacrifice the peculiar and certain blessings they enjoy in pursuit of the evils they imagine to exist.

You know with what reluctance I always leave our distant quiet town, which though not without its oppositions and its parties, generally sees their rancour expire in an angry epigram, or some patriotic dogma of its rival papers. But here (and if suffered to endure it will quickly spread over the nation) party assumes a more hideous aspect, our domestic hostilities become of more interest, and partake of more bitterness than is usually conveyed in the hatred of a foreign enemy. Bonaparte, and his plots, and his weddings are for the moment forgotten; he is allowed, for his honey-

moon, a respite from the jokes and the revilings of the British press; the public attention travels not with our brave army in Spain, nor is it arrested by “the storm that is brewing in the north.” No! it is all absorbed in the progress of the *first overt act* of our REFORMERS! OUR PATRIOTS BY PROFESSION!! the attack upon the privileges of the House of Commons.

As I approached the metropolis I found its neighbourhood occupied by troops, which a government, proverbially lenient, was compelled to assemble for the public safety, to encounter or prevent a shameful insurrection of the thoughtless populace, in opposition to an order of the House of Commons. The temperate and more manly determination to obey where resistance was only mischievous and absurd, reserving the resolution to try the RIGHT of that order by the sure and legal test of the Constitution, was not by the advisers of Sir Francis Burdett thought sufficiently striking. A more brilliant catastrophe was to be provoked, the cause was hitherto without its martyrs, and the contemptuous obstinacy of a sulky boy was assumed in the vain idea of trying the MIGHT of the Executive Government to enforce the will of our insulted representatives. The mob, always fond of novelty, and loving to be told of

the wrongs it endures, has at length become, it seems, the property of THE REFORMERS; at what *they* have only dared to hint, *it* has more generously and impetuously acted. An English mob is composed of the best of stuff, and of the soundest individual minds, but it is, collectively, ever too much at the service of the demagogues. Would to God that these gentry would have the honesty to be foremost themselves in the mischiefs they excite! but, with a wary cunning, they are contented to blow the trumpet in the rear, and, sending their credulous victims forward to the danger, would weave out of the very bloodshed they have perniciously instigated fresh irritations and new outrages, to lead to a repetition of the same result.

Thus, within this fortnight, have some innocent people been made to suffer, the civil power been set at defiance, and the peace of the capital, with the feelings of the whole nation, been outraged. When the journals, conveying this intelligence, shall reach the cabinet of Napoleone, his ministers, yet red with insurrection, and living monuments to the people of the earth, of the freedom which follows REVOLUTION and REFORM, will glance in a moment back to the ferments of Paris, in 1788 and 89, and, exclaiming that in

England too *the first step is taken*, they will congratulate their master on the successive massacres and the final despotism which we should have to wade through and to support.

To enquire after the actual formula of the privilege and power thus lately exercised by the House of Commons, is an investigation deeper than I have pretensions to direct ; nor need I assume that there are recorded statutes to guide me. It is, at least, a power not more undefined than much of our common law : it is as venerable as any custom can be traced in its practice, nor has it ever been called forth with more necessity, or pointed with more temper and moderation than in the instances which have provoked this discussion.

To argue then as to its origin is a question only for curious speculation, it is reasonably sufficient here to contend for *its necessity*. It is a power paramount to the insults of vulgar excess, without which the House cannot maintain its weight in the executive, nor its respectability in the eyes of the country ; it indeed would be a state of representation, a share in which it would be degradation to accept ; the members would sit in a manner tied and bound, affecting to shut their ears to the insolent abuse, whose virulence would increase with its impunity, and be poured forth from the

supreme debating societies which infest every corner of the metropolis, nay perhaps from the gallery itself; or, to screen themselves from outrage, would have no resource, but to close their doors against the public altogether, who would thus, by means of THEIR PATRIOTS, lose the gratification cheerfully allowed in the publicity of our national concerns.

It may appear a circumstance of surprise, that the FRIENDS OF THE PEOPLE, the SELF-CONSTITUTED GUARDIANS OF OUR RIGHTS, should wish to submit the privileges claimed by the representatives of *the people*, to the decision of judges appointed by *the Crown*! They would argue "before the king," against the rights and honours allowed *to themselves*, in the Commons, and hitherto exercised with safety to the constitution, without any question from the other two powers, who alone were likely to have the disposition, had they a power to oppose it. Combining with this remark an observation of the sudden change in their cry from "Our Sovereign, the people," to a mock reverence for "The King," a material alteration in their object might be conjectured. It is certainly a different mode of proceeding from what was adopted by the round-headed strait-forward disturbers of the 17th cen-

ture; they pulled at once upon the throne, and by actual violence effected its overthrow. The views of our reformers, though deeper calculated, are still but ill concealed; they are not the less deadly to the royal power, but their game is more insidious; they have found that a stubborn loyalty is wreathed about the hearts of Britons, which sets an open attack at defiance; they wish to be skreened in their operations by a pretended deference to the throne; they would use it as a stepping-stone to reach at the crown they would destroy, and exert, in the first instance, their efforts against the House of Commons, the broad foundation of the constitution, which, violently shaken, they know would bring down in its ruins the whole splendid superstructure.

Granting for the moment, which no matter of fact or of experience can substantiate, that a committal by the House of Commons, for an interference with its proceedings, or for a denial of its authority couched in terms as offensive, as its matter was inadmissible, was an assumption of privilege improper, because not defined in law, a power unknown to and unacknowledged by the people; then the necessity of a fresh enactment in that law only remains more obvious. If hitherto defective and doubted, the limit must be

come more extended and intelligible. We are all aware that, in the stages of revolution and anarchy, whatever is the executive which may exist, it exists only by a tyranny tenfold more oppressive than the organ of a regular government; and we should learn that, in the time, when revolution and insurrection are more than threatened, each branch of a regular Government should be armed with increased methods of defence.

But what is this penal punishment, about which so much ill blood has been raised, about which some good blood has been shed?—Where are the despotic acts of our Legislature, which are to demand the violent interposition of the people?—About what are we to meet and to exclaim, and to shake down the old authorities of our Government?—What are the dungeons?—How heavy is the duration to which our MARTYRS are doomed?—From what sufferings have the misguided and unfortunate rioters lavished their lives, and insulted the laws for their rescue?—For an evil too slight for the sympathy of poverty, for what to pride and contumely is a triumph, for a nearly nominal restriction, a confinement by the most lenient of judges, who, in their utmost wrath, almost leave the key in the prisoner's hand.

I know that the argument which I adopt is what may be called here *unpopular*. What I com-

communicate to you, may, amidst the multiplicity of more deserving productions, remain unnoticed and obscure; but were I an elector of Westminster, I would without dismay repeat it from the hustings, after the inflammatory harangue of the most favourite patriot. Had I an overweening regard for my personal safety, I might stand silent before a French or an American mob, in the most savage days of their revolutions, but I know my countrymen well; I regret that they are so easily given up to the wiles of our ridiculous reformers; nor should I fear, in the worst of days, to address to them the old language of our old laws and government. I would again and again direct their attention to France, for, to use a term of Mr. Cobbett's, *they cannot be told of those things too often.*

Under their first regime the people of that country had many grievances to endure; their taxes were heavy, unequally adapted, and their collection vexatious and ill-arranged. Artful and unprincipled politicians got possession of their minds, and instigated them to revolution and a wild revenge; how many have been cut off by the axe, or immolated in some more horrible manner, before the present iron period of their history, no records perhaps may number; but in its victims the revolutionary slaughter has been indis-

criminate, the criminal intriguer has bled himself to revenge the deaths of the families whom he has persecuted. *There* the will of *the people* has been indulged to the zenith of its frenzy, and for what have they at last exchanged their original evils? In amending they have undermined a government which, compared to the present, was mild as the care of a parent to the knife of an executioner. For a tax on salt they now pay a double tax in blood; for a temporary relief from feudal tenure, they contribute their children to the eternal conscription; for an old nobility whom they have envied and destroyed, they are fitted to the yoke of menial upstarts, under whose despotism it is death to murmur.

In answer to all the speculative theories of our reformers, we are here furnished with matter of fact, sufficient I trust to keep, by its precept, this kingdom in the enjoyment of internal tranquillity, enough to make each man rejoice at the sacrifice he makes, in support of an order of things perfect as the frailty of human nature will permit, and induce him to rally round and to support, not endeavour to counteract and embarrass his Government, in their great contest for the safety and existence of the country.

Though very little of my attention has been

engaged in political reflections, I have lived to see gradually and at last rapidly effecting, a material and unpleasing change in the disposition of my countrymen. The seeds of suspicion and discontent have been industriously sown upon a soil too susceptible of new impressions, and are quickly obliterating the open and generous feature which distinguished the British character. Disappointed, perhaps, at the partial fortune of the national enemy, they have been unfairly taught to account for the tide of his success, by scrutinizing for failings at home. They waste upon the Government, or upon one another, the energies that should be all directed abroad. We are becoming a divided people, a more easy prey to our old rivals, or a more early sacrifice to our own dissensions. Along with this state of irritation, is engrafted a strange apprehension of the public enemy; the warfare is not beheld with the steady and confident eye becoming England in her battle with France. The national taste and expectation is timid or capricious; to conquer when battle was inevitable, or to retire when retreat was advisable, have found in the same critics the same calumniators. To secure the applause of his country, the general must close his eyes on the scene of his exploits, or if

he lives, live to be taunted with rashness or branded with pusillanimity. The temporary failure of a well-projected and gallant enterprise is to fill our PATRIOTS with dismay, or to be a handle for angry troubles at home. A rigid spirit of inquisition is set on foot. The panders of the populace must drag out, and supply their perverted appetite with characters to destroy, and the altar of vulgar opinion is seldom left without its victim. In looking at the newspapers for some years back, we find them incessantly occupied in the dissection and mangling of public men. A sort of base vein of wrath and scandal, encreasing and growing more complex in its ramifications, is passing through and scaring many a noble sacrifice, distinguished for rank or for ability, and only more open, from the publicity of station, to the meanness of popular odium.

To oppose the spreading mischief of these new opinions, of these ill-disguised revolutionary doctrines, we look to the ostensible friends of the Crown and the Constitution, but we find them by local circumstances broken up and unconnected. Disagreeing upon matters of minor importance, they waste on each other the resentments and the opposition, which should be all planted against the desperate party, which has been swelling and

absorbing strength upon their ruins. Among the changes of the eventful time in which we live, it may not be unuseful to the present enquiry to give a moment's retrospect to the great change in the nature of parties in parliament. There used to be a systematic opposition, guided by strong constitutional professions, which, while it kept a check, perhaps necessary, upon the measures of a vigorous government, was equally prepared to restrain the foolish and dangerous encroachments of the people. Mr. Fox lived long enough to see dissolved those bands of statesmen, at the head of whom he and his rival Pitt, already no more, had so long divided the sentiments of the nation. No point of ancient union remains to collect them again together, the old land-marks of political principle seem to be effaced. The whig and the tory may combine into administration with no prejudice to disturb their cordiality, or may secede into a disorganised and tumultuous opposition where no pledge of action is required, and no system of operation is agreed upon. The old parties, thus cut up into such a variety of interests, find themselves frequently engaged on the side of the REFORMERS, who alone seem to preserve, in every question, a steady aim at their destined object; who level, through the ministry, at the state itself,

and, in their endeavours to dislodge the helmsmen, regard not the damage inflicted upon the vessel.

An opposition unwise enough to lend its exertions to our MODERN PATRIOTS may indeed enjoy popularity, till arriving themselves at power and odium, they, in their turn, become elevated marks for the hootings of the vulgar. But the popularity of this day is not formed for the man of any constitutional principle, he may be long carried high above our heads, but the point will at length come when he must stop, when he can no longer accommodate himself to the unstable and turbulent fancies of the people; then, with all the recollection of his former services, he will be buried beneath the wave, or, receding, it will leave him an object only conspicuous for their ridicule and hatred.

It is not with asperity that I would particularize many of the leaders whose talents and worth are lent to the use of a troublesome faction; there are certainly many among them who have occasioned sorrow rather than indignation, in the reflection that they have chosen to sink their characters to the level of such a cause. It may not be unworthy their attention, nor that of the thoughtless populace, who are in their train, that when the people become paramount in their will,

their idols invariably terminate by being their tyrants or their slaves. There is no middle course for an honest or patriotic ambition, they will be trampled on or forgot in the storm which they have contributed to raise, but which they have no influence to allay, or they must pervert the confidence that has been reposed in them, for the despotic coercion of those who have effected their elevation.

SIR FRANCIS BURDETT will shortly open his eyes to *the much* that is expected of him; he must either determine to stop short, to extricate himself from his load of popularity, or, if he is yet to be the leader of their game, tremble, *for all his firmness*, at the desperate chance he has to play. If I mistake not, it is not very long since even *his* exertions did not keep pace with the fury of his constituents, murmurs were already heard of *his indolence*, and it was even in contemplation to cast about for some more active adherent:—who the more experienced WORTHY was to be cannot now be divined, he rests hitherto undisturbed from his obscurity, and is likely there to remain; for by one glorious act of imprudence, by one generous and direct defiance, Sir Francis rises higher in their estimation than before. A crisis, an opportunity for the exhibition of patriotic violence has been

obtained, and the *proud* support of **THE REFORMERS** is its reward.

Posterity will hardly comprehend the extreme difference of estimation attached by his country to the services of a noble lord, when he treads the quarter-deck of a British man of war, or when he harangues from the hustings of Palace-Yard. With an intrepidity becoming the profession of which he is so distinguished an ornament, he rushes forward in the van of a party, who are surprised and delighted to find in a hero, their friend! To talk to him of *the danger* attending the dissemination of such principles, would probably only rouse his enthusiasm, and rivet him more closely to the cause of his adoption. Amidst the discoveries to excite the apprehension and alarm of the nation in which this gallant nobleman is so felicitous, he would have us believe that *a weakness threatens the British fleet!* but we will rather argue from the actions, than give full credence to the professions of this unexpected reformer, for in them we find many gallant proofs recorded in contradiction to such assertions. If he is resolved to waste the solid regard of his countrymen, by being only seen as the leader of a desperate faction, a better earned and more gratefully bestowed national admiration was never

squandered in so bad a service. But, the memory of his achievements will remain engraved upon our recollection, and when he can no longer be followed with applause, he will become an object for general regret.

A third and hardly less ostensible supporter of the reformers, can by this time pretty well communicate to the remaining *aspirants* the true relish for popularity; his exertions accidentally suiting the vitiated taste of the age, he at once mounted with it to the zenith. The legislators of the nation were entertained with the whole history of a woman's resentments, who had the fortune to discover, among her friends, one gentleman to procure them publicity. Her story, peculiarly fitted for the sympathy of the confidante of a retired apartment, was, with every spiteful minutia, which could at least distress the feelings where it did not assist the enquiry, forced upon the public attention, and received by our patriots with greedy ears, for the subject was the private failing of a prince! The extreme merit of all this discovery was received with exactly those acclamations to which it was liberally entitled. But a flame so pure requires many a fresh accession of fuel, to preserve it in permanent splendour. Are there not abuses sufficient and palpable enough to

feed *this one lamp*? The army great-coats have been applied and exhausted. The eloquent necessity of saving all we spend has had its glitter and expired. His well-deserved popularity is with the fickle multitude on the wane, and he may shortly have left only the happy approbation of his own bosom to rely upon.

To enter into any appeal with the horde itself, with those who love commotion, because no change can be for them the worse, with those whose characters and habits are indigenious to such a cause, with the eternal *talkers* who are as necessary to the piece, as music to a pantomime, and who, in common with the directors of a puppet-show, are always sure of their crowd, would indeed be an unhandsome call upon your attention, and a fruitless exhaustion of my own time. The good sense of the people will surely return, the admirers of these theorists will melt away, and leave them solitary and visible beacons of what we ought to shun.—I turn to a contest more important; of my cause I am not at all afraid; but to encounter and remark upon Mr. Cobbett, the giant of their party, may demand a better literary ability.

The political labours of Mr. Cobbett may be divided into two remarkable stages, in which they have reflected colours of the most opposite effect.

In the earlier part of his life, with a manly and somewhat romantic disregard for the fury of the rabble, he remained, to hazard the language of an enthusiastic and loyal Englishman, in the midst of the revolutionized mob of the United States. And now, in defiance of consistency, he ventures to disseminate throughout England, the doctrines of an American fanatic! He has been alternately the sound defender or the morose adversary of the government; the same line of conduct, and of opinion, has equally found in him its advocate and its opponent. Individual political characters have appeared upon his pages, supported with the applauses of an adherent, and embellished with the partiality of a private friend. They have afterwards been passed through the machinery of his unstable mind, and on another page been dismissed with all the force of his ridicule, with all the powers of his contempt. The strong energies of his mind are now directed to the subversion of what he has before eminently contributed to support. His language is nervous, with an assumption of blunt sincerity, and particularly adapted, from its familiarity of expression, and rejection of ornament, to the comprehension of the commonalty. The Political Register, wherever it is received, inflames its little circle, nay it is the ignis

fatuus pursued by the whole populace of Westminster, nor has it been without its weight in the late proceedings of the electors of Cambridge.

His style has, besides, the striking recommendation of novelty ; while it is guarded with the cunning and the vigilance of an attorney from the direct committal of libel, it has in it a roughness and personality, the experiment of whose effect had not by preceding writers been tried. The object of his attack is drawn in a coarse and strong caricatura, calculated, while it gratifies a political prejudice, to satiate a personal and hidden hatred. The statesman who incurs his opposition is not argued to or admonished, but is denounced as a criminal to the popular vengeance. Junius, hitherto the most caustic of our public disputants, wrote with the temper of a gentleman. The editor of the Register writes as *if he would strike*, he condemns as *if he would love to be the executioner*. The satire of the first cut deep, yet smooth, with the fineness of the razor ; the pen of the other mangles as with a hatchet.

At one of the two phases of his career, Mr. Cobbett must have either rejected all limit of principle, or have been most roundly mistaken. If he is only *now* in the right way of thinking, and in a becoming course of action, how agonizing should

be his reflection at the mischiefs which he laments, and which *he* has helped to occasion. If the present state of things is really *so very bad*, how ought he to regret the great share he has had in their perversion.

It is fortunate that the same mind, ere it distilled its poison, had to work out an antidote. The current pages of the Register are best, and conclusively refuted by a perusal of its earlier volumes, and by the first honest and unprejudiced productions of Mr. Cobbett.

The personality of these remarks shall be terminated by a slight animadversion upon the precepts and machinations of a venerable politician, who, during the vigour of his youth and ability, never had the fortune to secure a partisan or public friend. In a far advanced age, when a decaying frame is an insufficient organ for the unsubdued impulses of his active and turbulent disposition, he has found pupils eager to receive and propagate his doctrine; he may exist not without the hope, "ere he depart and be no more seen," of witnessing some of the blossom from the pernicious plants of his culture. The journals of half a century commemorate the virulent and indiscriminate disputes of a life spent in an angry and ingenious opposition to the order of society;

the phenomenon of his *political agreements* has been reserved for the inconsistencies of more suitable days.

As the danger of anticipated mischief may be always blunted by opportunity for preparation, the ultimate aim of the reformers is not developed in the open and undisguised topics of their complaint. Those, indeed, serve as a sort of *standing grievances*, for the purpose of monotonous declamation, but they can lay them quietly aside to give a sharper edge to the multiplying occurrences of the moment. No reform short of revolution, no change short of complete disorder, and which shall put all power within their controul, can keep pace with their unquiet determination. An endless succession of minor but of mischievous discontents is displayed to agitate the nation. An unlooked-for disturbance has now burst upon us, in the attack upon the power of parliament. How much further the line is to be spun from this event it is needless to conjecture, for there is no public occurrence whatever, from which uproar may not be excited by the eloquence of our civic orators.

THE CATHOLIC QUESTION, though so often vanquished, with a peculiar facility of revival, is become an unextinguishable torch, and will con-

tinue a subject of animosity, as long as there exists in the country any dread of the power of France, or a deprecation of treason in Ireland. Had not that form of religion found the adoption and support of Bonaparte, I regret to believe that its advocates would not have marshalled in such strength. A concession on this point seeming rather to be recommended to our fears than argued to our reason, my undiminished confidence in the power of the nation, and the integrity of her establishment, would induce me to reject it.

Independent of the time and circumstance of its introduction, I cannot see, in the measure itself, a sufficient pledge of that increased unanimity which it professes to acquire. No penal statutes now remain to oppress the great body of our Roman Catholics, the poor of Ireland. They may be said to require a relief from tythes, but such a measure might only tend to the abrogation of all ecclesiastical system, without the desired benefit to themselves; as the landlords would immediately lay upon their estates the increased value of the abolished tythes. That an amelioration of the state of this class of the community is absolutely necessary, I would assist strongly to enforce: but I repeat my conviction, that their happiness and peace are in the hands of the indi-

vidual landlords alone ; that no interference of Parliament in the shape of Catholic Emancipation, or any other mode short of fixing the maximum of rents, can do them any real service. Those who pretend to explain their sufferings direct all their complaints into this narrow channel, but the hope to restore their quiet, by acting upon such a presumption, would be to throw out a feather for an anchor, " to cast a stone for bread."

By opening the highest orders of the professions and the state to the ambition of the Catholics, the public councils would no doubt gain an accession of much respectable talent, and the landed interest probably secure a preponderating influence in the representation. But these advantages cannot be procured at a less expence than the eventual hazard of the Protestant Supremacy, for their encroachments and our concessions would be perpetual, till reaching an equal level, a contest for the mastery would remain to be decided. With a disposition not illustrative of the frank and generous character of the Sister Island, the demands of the Catholics have kept even pace with the national embarrassments. A long reign of lenient and parental attention has removed every galling restriction, without producing a

correspondent cordiality, or alleviating the ferment of their discontent. So determined are they now become in their demands, that no capitulation whatever is to be admitted in our terms, we are called upon to surrender at discretion; they would no doubt expect to plant their Bench of Bishops in the House of Lords; and thus, by a splendid patronage, indemnify the Pope for the spoliations of his elder children. May such harmony and such a bond of union, remain a distant and beautiful object for speculation, but be never tarnished by the actual experiment!

The necessity of a **PARLIAMENTARY REFORM** is urged by many arguments, which impute the difficulties of the state to the corruption in the House of Commons, and which recommend a more liberal extension of the elective franchise, in the assumption that the present class of voters are insufficient as to numbers, or honesty, to return a fair representation of the people. To those who see no danger in opening the door to innovation, or who conceive that our modern patriots would be so easily satisfied, no theory can be less objectionable. But if the majority of the present constituents is really corrupt and unworthy of trust, what is the chance of improvement from any varied selection of a people, who by a con-

sequent analogy may be considered equally depraved? As long as gold possesses its faculty of insinuation, we may dread, that in spite of every precaution short of a sanguinary penal statute, the road to a bargain of the representation will lie as open as ever. To diffuse a more general property in the votes, might serve only to raise the price of the markets, and, by the splendour of the purchase, rivet the aristocratic influence more exclusively than before. That such a consequence is to be lamented I am eager to admit, but my sympathy and regrets are not very violently excited, because the state of society is not sufficiently original for the precepts of a Lycurgus. I should rejoice to see the House of Commons cleansed from every suspicion of impurity by the honesty of the electors, but it rather appears to me, that the matter for reform lies in the disposition of the people, than in the constitution of the legislature, and that no interference of the parliament would be competent to enforce a consistent exercise of the privilege of election, to whatever class of the community it might be delegated.

After all the obloquy which our rotten boroughs seem to demand, no matter of fact evinces that the members actually furnished by them, are per-

sonally of a description less adequate for the important trust, than those chosen in a mode less corrupted or controuled. It would indicate the obstinacy of a bigot, the very slave of a party, wilfully blind to the publicity of the parliamentary proceedings, to deny that the house is unremittingly engaged in the superintendence of the revenue, and vigilant in enquiry into every branch of the expenditure. An economical reform, which is a promised effect of the other reform, is in fact *already nearly attained*, or in a close and certain course of pursuit. Minute retrenchments and careful regulations are instituted in every public department. The ancient sources of ministerial patronage, and the private power of reward in the Crown, are largely contributed to the exigence of the state. It is not fair to impute to these days, the abuses which had accumulated for a century, and which it is the daily occupation of our legislature to detect with rigour, and restrain with impartiality.

It would not suit the dignity of this powerful empire, to measure her resources with the penurious calculation befitting the establishment of a transatlantic republic. I wish not to witness the time when a statesman may arrive at the possession of power, without the emolument adequate to the distinction, and responsibility of his ap-

pointment. A more tyrannical government than a ministry, thus independent of the national favour, I cannot imagine to exist. They must, in accepting of place, have in view some object higher than its present ostensible reward, and probably dangerous to the liberties of the country, which they might pursue to its completion, unchecked by the desire for popular regard, now so much the interest of an administration to retain. Some modern Charlatans loudly tender their wish to accept of office upon the cheapest of terms; and to direct our affairs for the mere gratification of their patriotism; I much question, should they once get *in*, but we might discover that while they were unanimous in a jealousy of the people in possession, they had by no means an indiscriminate objection to the existence of the places themselves.

Mr. Cobbett has *astounded* many a *ruminating* village politician, by his description of the taxes of *whole parishes*, devoured by some one placeman, who is produced as the immediate object for his opprobrium. The chicanery of such representations is unworthy his affectation of solid reasoning: it is a mere tub to the whale. Were he, with the minuteness of calculation in which he is an adept, to explain how much the parish, and (if nominal fractions descended so low) how little each

person would be in pocket, by the abolition of *all such* places, his rustic followers would turn ungratified and disappointed from his labours.

There is surely no necessity that the minor savings of the state should be at once ungraciously enforced, to the immediate ruin of many unoffending families ; nor would the violent introduction of such Jewish principles, the gratification of what resembles an individual hatred, rather than an enlightened policy, be likely to acquire the approbation of the country.

In such a review of the leading points of discussion, as the limits of a production irksome from its novelty would admit, it has not been my intention to deny that, in every regulation of society, there will be found some defection or inconvenience sufficient to excite a partial irritation of the discontented ; my object has rather been to remove the microscope from the public eye, to restore the mole-hil to its just dimension, believing that, by the rational and temperate course of reform now acted upon, every grievance will ultimately be more safely removed, than by the interposition of an innovation, which by altering the habits might endanger the existence of the constitution.

If they have any sort of title to the patriotism

they affect, the turbulent disturbers of the public mind should be restrained by the consideration that the ferments they excite are the best allies which Napoleon has hitherto discovered in his contest with Great Britain, and that they are more effective towards our final extinction and overthrow, than all his victories and acquisitions on the Continent. The rest of the nation looks on disgusted at the outrages against a Government, which in their very occurrence are proofs of its lenity.

My tax upon your attention is now at an end, I have completed the short task so unexpectedly undertaken, and drawn from me by the unusual circumstances of the moment ; I rise from it with a consciousness, that, however defective in arrangement, the observations are those of a mind ardently zealous for the glory and security of the country.

Finis.

